

STONE MEN OF MALEKULA

184 island already referred to,¹ and, through their co-existence with the overt patrilineal organisation shared by the Small Islands with Ambrim and with all parts of Malekula, have produced in the Small Islands also a sectional organisation not found elsewhere in Malekula. The result of this organisation on the megalithic ritual of the Small Islands is to divide the whole population of any given patrilocal village into the two groups already mentioned, each of which alternately performs the rite; and this rite is consequently of such a protracted nature that the cycle of ritual observances accompanying it takes almost a generation to perform, the minimum period in Vao being some fifteen years, followed by an interval of several more years before the resources of the community have sufficiently recovered for the other group composed of alternate generations in the male line to shoulder the responsibility of, and reap the honours due to, its repetition. In Atchin the minimum period is even longer, the ritual cycle there lasting about thirty years.

MEGALITHIC RITE CALLED MAKI

Main characteristics.

769 This main megalithic rite is in the Small Islands called *Maki*, and its
 796 counterpart throughout the whole mat-skirt area of Malekula is called by variants of the same word, of which the best known is *Mangki*,² as recorded by Deacon from South-West Bay. It is on the one hand a "mystery" in the sense outlined in the Preface, based, like all mysteries, on a ritual re-birth, of which the outward and visible signs are here the taking of a new name and lighting of a new fire on which, or from brands taken from it, the food for the re-born individual's sustenance must be cooked. As a rule, also, during the period immediately following the culminating act of re-birth the celebrant ritually becomes a child, in that for a minimum of thirty days he may not cook his own food nor leave the holy place where he has taken up his abode. During this period of spiritual as well as physical retirement, though his food may be cooked, with due precautions, by his wife, he abstains from sexual intercourse and observes many other taboos, one of the commonest of which is that he may not look on the sea. By these means he becomes at one also with the ancestral dead in whose footsteps through the observance of the rite he treads. The stone monuments he sets up are likewise erected not only for himself and, in the Small Islands, for all those who perform the rite with him, but also for those same ancestors who have performed it before him, and whose ghosts, together with his own after his death,

¹ See p. 5 and later on pp. 118 ff.

² In Deacon's posthumously published work this is referred to throughout as *Nimangki*, in which *ni-* is only the indefinite article and is therefore redundant. For other variants of this word see p. 692.

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133 beauty of Vao. Here, facing the channel, on the island's south-western shore, is the lovely beach called Kōwu,¹ forming a long shallow bay, bounded on its north-western extremity by a wide reef. If we have the good fortune to arrive not too early in the morning, before the exodus to the mainland has begun, we may see no fewer than eighty canoes ranged side by side, following the curve of the beach, high up on the sand, out of reach of the tide. Slowly the natives come down, the men with their guns bought from white traders, without which they never move off the island, the women with baskets, their babies on their backs, the children playing and occasionally helping.

After much talk and laughter, each family group will separately carry or drag its canoe down to the sea, and soon a fleet of perhaps fifty canoes will be crossing the channel, each heading for its own landing-place on the mainland opposite. If the wind is favourable, sails made of pandanus strips dyed red, plaited by the women and sewn together by the men, are hoisted, each shaped like an inverted triangle.² If there is no wind, or if it is in the wrong quarter, paddles alone must do the work, and the gay cries of the paddlers echo over the sea.

WALK THROUGH THE VILLAGE DANCING-GROUNDS

Men's paths and women's paths. The sacred way.

487 If, having watched this pleasing scene, we now turn towards the interior of the island, we find the choice of two paths. Perhaps a few 562 stray natives are still coming down to the shore. Of these we notice that the men with confident air take one, while the women, more modest with their load of baskets, take the other. At the spot where the men come out on to the shore there is a wall of stones³ lining the path, which has been consecrated by the sacrifice of a large number of tusked boars. This marks the shoreward end of the great sacred way that leads from one end of the island to the other. The stone wall itself and the boars sacrificed on it indicate among other things that this section of the way is taboo to women and to male children who have not yet taken the first step in their formal religious life by themselves sacrificing their first boars.

This way leads upwards towards the centre of the island. About thirty yards from its abutment on the shore it is joined by the women's path, and from here onward it may be used by women as well as men, since no further sanctified monuments lie on this part of the way. On approaching the first village dancing-ground, it divides once more, the

¹ Godefroy (1, 1933, p. 30), following his predecessor, Père Jamond, supposes this word to be derived from the English word "cove," and tells a circumstantial story to prove it. This is a false derivation. It is a native name and occurs in song-language as *kr-u*.

² See p. 460.

³ I did not record the name for this wall on Vao. In Atchin it is *na-wor*.

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346 within which is also the family cemetery in which old men of high rank are buried. No women born outside the village (which, owing to clan exogamy, includes all wives and mothers of clan members) are allowed inside this enclosure, and those born within it (that is to say, the lodge-members' sisters and daughters) are only allowed in when specially invited on some errand by one of the senior members, or on certain ritual occasions.

This organisation into lodges will be fully described in the chapter on Social Organisation. Enough has been said now to enable us to enter the village without trespassing where we are not wanted and to understand something of what is going on.

Dress.

20 As we go up from the beach we shall have the opportunity first of observing native dress. As may be seen in the photograph of Kowu beach (Plate I), young boys and young girls go completely naked. When they are about six or eight years old, the boys start wearing a plaited string belt of soft material around their waists. This belt will have at first only a single coil, but as they grow older the number of coils increases till the string belt assumes quite lengthy proportions and may be wound as many as six or seven times around the waist. At about the age of puberty the boys put on a new garment. This is a penis-wrapper made out of a banana leaf stripped longitudinally in half with the midrib removed but leaving enough of the central fibre to withstand a certain amount of wear. This leaf is wound round and round the penis spirally, in such a way that the windings continue beyond the glans. This continuation of the wrapper is then drawn up over the string belt and finally tucked in behind it from above. The penis is thus held vertically upwards parallel to the central line of the abdomen, with the testicles completely exposed to view. This is the ordinary dress of youths not yet initiated. On initiation, the banana-leaf wrapper, called *nu-mba-nu-mba*, is retained as an under-garment, but is now covered by a ceremonial penis-wrapper (*na-avu*) consisting of a flat strip of material plaited by women from thin strips of pandanus-palm leaf, dyed red and ornamented with designs in the dull yellow colour left by immersion in the juice of turmeric leaves. Both ends of the wrapper are so constructed as to leave a fringe of the same material, slit very fine so as to form tassels. This wrapper is wound round the penis in the same way as the underlying banana-leaf wrapper, and the tassels similarly tucked over and behind the plaited string belt. Over the string belt and tassels is now wound a broad bark-board belt called *na-tuu*, about six inches wide, made of the inner bark of a special tree sometimes covered with coconut fibre, wound round in super-imposed coils, which cover the abdomen from above the navel to the groin. This is in turn held in place by a plaited belt called *na-tuu*, also made by women and in

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dwelling-enclosures of the Lodge members clustered close around. As the cemeteries where old men are buried increased in size, and as, moreover, the number of burials of young men, women and children inside their dwelling-houses grew also, the original sites tended to be abandoned and new Lodges and cemeteries (such as that of the existing *La-mbet-ra* shown on the plan), as well as new dwelling-houses, began to be built rather further afield. This tendency has not, however, reached the point achieved in the Atchin double-village of Ruruar, which, as will be shown in a later volume, has now become so decentralised that the dwelling-enclosures form a kind of irregular ring round the site of the original village, which is now occupied exclusively by the cemeteries with their accompanying Lodges.

WOMEN'S LODGES

While the above account refers almost exclusively to the overt patrilineal organisation of the island, it is of interest to note the existence at the same time of Women's Lodges recorded by Godefroy on Vao, but not existing, so far as I know, elsewhere in the Small Islands.

Referring to a "large carefully guarded enclosure at the base of a slope" in which there are "five or six houses, well kept and with the ground around them carefully cleaned and even swept," Godefroy says: "This collection of houses so carefully fenced . . . is strictly reserved for women. It is there that the matrons of Pete-hul and of Togh-vanu receive women of these same clans when they are about to give birth. The midwife of these two clans is assisted by their close relatives,¹ and together they give, or rather lavish care upon them over a period of three weeks. At the end of this time the mother or the grandmother of the woman who has given birth to the child comes, with other relatives, to take away the mother and her baby and bring them back to her own home." Thus "women also have places which are taboo to men. It is a fact that no men are allowed within this enclosure, and, I may add, only such women as have themselves been born there have the right of entry. A mother who has given birth there, but was not herself born there, is rigorously excluded excepting during the period of her confinement. It is for this reason that the place is called 'the birth enclosure,' *hu ni-ar na woruan*. . . . It is quite simply a native lying-in ward."⁴

Special interest attaches to the name by which this enclosure is called. The term *hu ni-ar* is in fact composed of two words, *hu* which I have recorded in Vao as *hu-hu*, meaning "to suckle" or "to be suckled,"² and *ni-ar* meaning "a fence." *Woruan* is clearly another spelling for the word

¹ Godefroy, I, 1933, p. 230.

² Presumably of the women in labour.

³ "Enclos de la naissance."

⁴ "Maternité."

⁵ See p. 178. Compare Mota *hu-hu*, "to give suck."

GONG-RAISING

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The practical result of the performance, probably based on an acoustic principle that is beyond the range of my own knowledge, is that the length of the slit is made equal to the exterior circumference of the gong.

A fowl is killed and given, together with a live pig, as payment to the magician, and tidings are sent round to all the Vao villages announcing what has been done, the messengers taking with them to each village a message-yam decorated with croton leaves together with a single killed pig for which, being for food only, no sacrificial signal is sounded. This pig is called *masoamp*, a word of which I did not enquire the exact meaning, but is probably compounded from *mas*, meaning "provisions," and *oamp*, which, when applied in the form of *tamat-oamp* to the ghosts of men slain in battle, indicates absence of mortuary rites, in this case represented by the absence of the sacrificial signal. This pig is probably made the occasion of a *masean* feast, being one for which the recipients have not previously worked.

Skilled gong-makers hollow out the gongs, which are surrounded by a screen.

Skilled workers are now called for to assist in hollowing out the gongs. I will call them the gong-makers. These may be taken from any village and from either "line." Usually those who have previously worked at successful gongs are chosen.

A screen, called *na-lit*, is built inside the *ghamal*, and no one may enter it except those who are working on the gongs. Once the work has been started it must not be discontinued from sunrise to sundown, and to maintain this standard the workers are organised into shifts. When any one shift gets tired the workers composing it come out from behind the screen into the *ghamal* while the next shift takes up the uninterrupted work. While resting, the gong-makers are supplied with magnificent puddings. Not until nightfall may the work cease, and it must be resumed again before sunrise on the following morning. From the time the work is begun until the gongs are finished none of the workers may leave the *ghamal*, except only to relieve nature.

Restrictions imposed during hollowing out.

During this time no person of the home-village, man or woman, may have any sexual connexion, nor may they step over the buttress root of a *gha-tambol* tree, nor drink water, nor may they eat fish, nor the fruit of the *tawd* tree, nor anything that is roasted on stones. If yams are to be roasted the greatest care must be taken that there are no stones in the place where the fire is made. At the beginning of this period the list of these restrictions is publicly announced by the magician. All those subject to them are said to be *vel-val*, a word meaning "sacred" or "taboo." ¹

¹ See p. 400.

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These restrictions apply primarily to the Maki-men and their wives, on whom they are absolutely binding. Their application to other members of the village is not quite so stringent; if one of these, however, were to break, say, the rule against sexual intercourse, he would be careful not to handle any of the food that is to be taken to the workers. The restrictions do not apply to the married daughters of the Maki-men, living as they do in another village, but if one of these has sexual intercourse with her husband at this time she may not come into the home-village.

The gong-makers themselves are not subject to any of the restrictions on food, though the restrictions on walking and on sexual intercourse are implied in their confinement within the precincts of the *ghamal*.

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Expert "puts the voice into the gongs"; expert and gong-makers sound them, and others inspect.

From time to time the expert pays a visit to the *ghamal* to see how the gongs are progressing and to instruct the workers.

When he sees that the work is finished,¹ he appoints a day, about three days ahead, when he will come and "put the voice ² into the gongs." The restrictions on the villagers continue to be imposed until this is performed. The gong-makers also remain in the *ghamal* till, on the day before the ceremony, they make ready for it by going down to the sea to seek a hole ³ in the reef on to which the waves break with a resonating sound. As the water splashes up from this hole they catch the spray in bamboos and conch shells, saying that they are catching the voice of the hole, and carry it back to the *ghamal*.

Next day the expert comes and goes alone behind the screen and, singing softly over the spray, pours it, and with it the voice of the resounding waves, into the gongs. Then he sounds the gongs in turn, giving four ⁴ strong strokes to each, so that everyone hears the sound and knows that the new gongs are finished.

Then all the gong-makers enter the screen, pay the expert with money-mats, penis-sheaths and other articles, and then sound the gongs again. Finally, the general public is admitted to inspect the gongs, though they are not permitted to sound them.

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Velal danced in rotation.

The gongs being now ready, the festivities leading up to their erection and subsequent consecration begin by the members of the introducing "line," followed by those of all the Vao villages, coming in prescribed rotation at intervals of several days. They perform the preliminary circular

¹ I have no record of who carves the faces on the gongs. This work is presumably done by the expert himself.

² *halaghan*.

³ *harum*.

⁴ Four is the number most frequently used in magic; see p. 644.

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For while the Maki-man's daughter belongs to his own patrilineal moiety and his mother to his own matrilineal moiety, and on this account both these relatives may be invested by him and may adopt his own name, the wife belongs to neither. The wife therefore can neither be invested by him direct, nor yet take his name, but must be invested indirectly by his mother (whom he has himself previously invested and who at the same time belongs to the same patrilineal moiety as the wife), and takes the name of her own brother who is the male representative of her own kinship section.

It is worth noting that, while this Vao form of the rite is thus clearly seen to be founded on a 4-section system, in the later forms of monolith-Maki now practised on Atchin and Wala this pattern has succumbed to the predominating influence of patrilineal descent to the extent that the wife there has the choice of taking the name of either her father, her brother or her brother's son.

POST-SACRIFICIAL PERIOD

Maki-men undertake various periods of retreat, and eat in ghamal.

As I have already said, after the great sacrifice all the Maki-men go into retreat, for a period of thirty days. It will be remembered that a similar period of seclusion is undergone by women and their children after childbirth,¹ and there is little doubt that this period of retreat for the Maki-men represents a similar period of inward recuperation after the efforts and satisfactions of their own re-birth. The focal point for this retreat is the *ghamal*, where all meals must be eaten. The younger men also sleep in the *ghamal*, but those older men who possess specially sanctified dwelling-houses may, if they so wish, sleep in these, going to the *ghamal* to eat. At the end of this thirty-day period a special rite takes place.² This period must be observed by all, down to the youngest Maki-man, those who are released at the end of this time being probably those who took part only in the mass sacrifice. Those who sacrificed at the dolmen, however, may extend this period, voluntarily and in accordance with their own powers of piety and endurance, to fifty or one hundred days or even, in cases of men of very high supernumerary rank, two or three years, though in the case of these extended periods the rule about eating in the *ghamal* is relaxed. Others, particularly pious and ambitious, will, on the Thirtieth Day, impose upon themselves yet further voluntary restrictions until they have succeeded in making a new Maki either for themselves or for their sons.³

¹ See p. 179.

² See pp. 402, 430.

³ See p. 405.

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Restrictions on sexual intercourse. Wives cook for their husbands and must themselves be cooked for by others. Neither may leave village nor behold the sea.

During the period of thirty days immediately following the Maki a man may not have sexual intercourse with his wife nor any other woman. At the same time his ritual helplessness (for he is now ritually a new-born infant) is symbolised by the fact that he may not on any account cook for himself, but if he is married his wife must cook for him in his own dwelling-house and either send his meals to him in the *ghamal* or he must come and fetch them himself.¹ Thus, during this period of retreat, his wife virtually becomes his mother, who feeds him but with whom he has no sexual connexion. This does not mean, however, that she shares his sanctity. For, while normally a man may not eat women's food, this separation is now increased to the extent that even his food may not be defiled by coming in contact with any woman's food. Therefore, his wife, who cooks for him, may not cook for herself, but another woman must cook for her, and the wife must convey this food to her mouth by means of a leaf, taking care not to touch it with her hands. Even so, in case of some accidental touching, she must wash her own hands after she has finished eating.

During this same period, and, in the case of those undertaking yet longer retreats, during the whole period they cover, neither the Maki-men nor their wives may go down to the beach nor even to any other village on the island. Far less may they leave the island. If a man breaks this rule before his time is up he must expiate each such offence by sacrificing a pig.

Restrictions and those undertaking them called vel-val.

All such restrictions involving abstinence of any kind, whether from food or from going down to the sea, but especially from sexual intercourse, are called *vel-val*. This word is used also for those undertaking such acts of abstinence, whence it comes to mean also what we should translate as "sacred" or "taboo," and it is in this sense that it may have been used as a title for one of the now obsolete Maki ranks.²

Many other restrictions are also observed, of which I made no detailed record on Vao, though I did so on Atchin, and an account of these will be given in a later volume. The word regularly used for these restrictions among the converts of the French Roman Catholic Mission on Vao is "pénitence."

¹ I omitted to enquire who would cook for an unmarried Maki-man. This rôle would presumably be taken by his mother or mother's sister.

² See pp. 563, 609. The "high" personal name Val-vale is probably derived from this (see p. 434). Compare also *Mota val*, "to refrain from certain food as an act of mourning," with its derivatives *sales* and *val-val* (Codrington, 2).

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Women may not eat yam called ro-toro.

One special restriction which I recorded is that, from the day when the Maki-men's wives, daughters and mothers take their complimentary titles and assume their mourning-caps till the day when these latter are put off, neither the Maki-men nor any of these women may eat a special kind of yam called *ro-toro*. Why this should be I do not know. This restriction and those observing it are also called *vel-val*, a term which is thus seen to be also applicable to women.

No restrictions whatever are observed either by the Maki-men's sisters or by any members of the introducing "line."

FOURTH DAY AFTER THE MAKI

Rite called *Tòghòghon* for Memorising Maki-men's new Titles and Names

I have already pointed out that during the mass sacrifice, and in the noise and confusion occasioned by it, there was no general announcement of the Maki-men's new titles and names, only those taken at sundown by those sacrificing at the dolmen being publicly uttered. For this reason, on the Fourth Day after the Maki there takes place a rite called *Tòghòghon*, the purpose of which is to fix in people's minds the new titles and names that have been taken.

Introducing "line" and all villages assemble. Maki-men issue from ghamal singing Oba men's song. Their names are called out and they are presented with yams.

For this purpose, men and women of the introducing "line" and parties from all the other villages on Vao assemble in the dancing-ground holding in their hands yams wrapped up magnificently in leaves of the dracaena (*ro-sigh*) and thatch-palm (*ni-at*), those held by the men being further decorated with hibiscus flowers (*hakaul*) or, failing these, erotons. When all are assembled, the Maki-men, who have been decorating themselves in the *ghamal*, issue from it and dance towards them, singing the same Oba men's sea-song that was sung by them during the Exhibition of Pigs.¹ Thus singing and dancing, they approach first the men and women of the introducing "line," consisting of their own fathers, sons and daughters. As they come near, one of the men of this "line" sacrifices a pig, and at the same time another man of the same "line," who has already been told, calls out the new title and name of the foremost Maki-man, crying out "*M . . . (title and name) O!*" The Maki-man

¹ See p. 381.

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Translated freely, the words mean:

"The young men of Peter-ihī,
 The young men have nothing,¹ they talk² in vain;
 The young men of Peter-ihī,
 The young men have nothing, they talk in vain;
 Our young brother,³ Melteg-tal-we-gharu,
 He sacrifices a circle-tusker, he sacrifices (it).
 Melteg-oru goes to Peter-ihī
 And shows it to the young men of Peter-ihī
 Who walk about, and talk in vain."

Vows taken by certain Maki-men to abstain each from some desired object of food till he has made a new Maki for himself or for his son.

When these personal songs are over, and each individual Maki-man has been thus lauded, the dancers all throw away their sticks and, clapping their hands, start singing the Oba Men's Song sung during the Exhibition of Pigs and again later before the announcing of the Maki-men's new names on the Fourth Day after the Maki. While they are doing this, one of the Maki-men who sacrificed at the dolmen issues from the crowd and dances round them, hissing fiercely and holding out his right hand as if grasping a spear. This is a sign that he wishes to make an important announcement. When the song is over, one of the dancers therefore calls out to him, "You speak. We want to hear what you have to say." The Maki-man then answers, "You ask me to speak. What shall I say?" Then, walking round them and gesticulating fiercely to show the fixity of his purpose, he makes a vow, swearing that he will abstain from some desired object till he has made another Maki, or made a new Maki for his son. He may swear that he will not eat a certain kind of yam, or banana, or some other article of food; but that he will "go home and pick out one of his pigs, and will feed it and feed it and feed it until it has grown into a circle-tusker, so that at last he will 'kill Maki'⁴ with it, and then, and not till then, will he eat that yam." Some men who are unusually "strong," that is to say determined or pious, will even abstain from eating in the *ghamal* or leaving the island until they have again made Maki either for themselves or for their sons.

Having made his vow, the Maki-man resumes his place among the crowd of dancers, and the same song or another belonging to the same

¹ I.e. no pigs.

² I.e. boast.

³ The word *melangele*, meaning "young man" or "youth," is a complimentary one, all Maki-men being theoretically held to be in the prime of young manhood. This is at the same time followed by the word *tu tu*, a term of respect used in ordinary parlance for "elder brother."

⁴ This is a literal English translation of the native phrase, which in Atchin is *a pale maki*, meaning "to make the Maki sacrifice"; used intransitively the phrase was *Maki a pal*, "Maki is sacrificed."

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cycle is repeated while another Maki-man in his turn issues and dances round them and then makes his vow. Not every man makes such a vow; only those who are "strong," and of these the least important comes first, so that of the successive vow-makers each vies with the last in undertaking more and more stringent restrictions.

PERIODS OF EXTENDED VOLUNTARY RETREAT

This ends the proceedings of the Thirtieth Day. The younger and less important Maki-men are now released from their retreat. Those Maki-men who sacrificed at the dolmen and who imposed longer periods upon themselves must continue their retreat until such period be over. Only the regulation about eating in the *ghamal* is relaxed, but they must still observe the prime regulation about not leaving the village and not going down to, or even seeing, the sea, and this stringent restriction is shared by their wives, who all the time feed them.

PERIODS OF VOLUNTARY RESTRICTION BROUGHT TO AN END

Wives bathe, and a taboo placed against fishing in their bathing-place.

The next item in the post-sacrificial rites is the removal of these restrictions, both for the Maki-men and for their wives. As there are certain customary periods of time, such as fifty or one hundred days, for which special vows are taken, it usually happens that several Maki-men are freed from their obligations on the same day. On this day all the wives of these men gather together and go to bathe at a certain place on the shore. When they have bathed, a cycas leaf is planted at either end of this place, indicating that no fish may be taken from it till the removal, a year or two later, of the women's mourning-caps, when fish from this place are ritually eaten.¹ Though the fish are thus tabooed, the place may still be used by either men or women for bathing. Returning home after this first purifying bathe, each woman sacrifices a pig,² and is henceforth free to go where she will, though she still wears her mourning-cap.

FIFTH OR SIXTH YEAR

MAKI-MEN'S WIVES CEASE MOURNING

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Velal danced by all villages in rotation.

The last scene of all does not take place till, after an interval of one or two years, the wives' mourning-caps are finally removed. The importance of this last rite is marked by the previous dancing of *Velal* first by

¹ For a similar taboo after the Banks Islands rite of *Kolekole* see Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 136.

² My only other record of women sacrificing pigs is in the Women's Maki (see p. 452).

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the members of the introducing "line" and then, at intervals of several days, by parties from all the Vao villages in the prescribed order. On each occasion a live pig is given to the dancers and message-yams are distributed to all the villages with news of the date on which the next village is to come. The rite itself is fixed for about the third day after the last village comes to dance.

Fish from wives' bathing-place sent to all villages. Wives remove mourning-caps and step over aligned yam poles.

Early in the morning of the appointed day, fish from the place where the women had bathed after being released from their restrictions, and which had since then been tabooed, are shot or speared and sent, with message-yams, as a present to every Vao village, where they are straight-way cooked in puddings and eaten. [784]

Later, at about mid-day, attached-yams and lone-yams are set out in the usual alignment in the dancing-ground, one heap for each village. Then, in the presence of men and women from all over the island, the Maki-men's wives¹ perform a rite called *ghor-ghor*, from *ghore* meaning to "open" and so to "remove a restriction."² Having removed their mourning-caps for the first time in public since they were imposed at least one and perhaps two years ago, and in their place smeared their heads with black ashes, they enter the dancing-ground, each carrying in her hand her cap neatly wrapped up in umbrella-palm and other leaves. Then, advancing in single file, they perform precisely the same rite as is done by the chief mortuary official when issuing from his own period of seclusion after the death of an old man of high rank.³ One after the other, they walk over the ends of the bamboos to which the attached-yams are tied, and, as they step over, touch each bamboo with their hand. This act is ritually equivalent to touching the yams themselves, and by so doing they show that they are no longer taboo as mourners, and that the food which is about to be distributed all over the island is no longer defiled by contact with them.

Wives' brothers paid with high-grade tuskers for the burden imposed on the wives.

Having touched all the bamboos, each woman approaches her husband, who pays a tusker to his wife's brother for the burden that has been imposed on the wife by the wearing of the mourning-cap and by the

¹ In speaking of this rite my informant mentioned only those wives who have been given the title of *Le-at*, i.e. those whose husbands have performed High Maki at least once. Whether it includes those also who are as yet only *Le-lek* I do not know.

² Compare the gong-signal called *taa-taa-ghore* (p. 313). It is possible that there may also be an allusion to the ritual rounding up of fish, also called *ghor-ghor*, of which more will be said in a later volume on Atchin, where it is called *hor hor*.

³ See p. 556.

HIGH MAKI

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the members of the introducing "line" assemble in the dancing-ground, where they are regaled with puddings containing fowls made by the Maki-men and placed in their earth-ovens overnight. They then proceed to build the stone-platform, which from now on is called *vet nis-nas*. The platform is constructed of the dry coral blocks brought from the beach, without binding material of any kind but so skilfully placed that the front elevation facing the dancing-ground is almost vertical. When constructed on flat ground the rear elevation is sloped so as to allow the sacrificer to mount it. At Pete-hul, on the other hand, where a natural rise in the ground behind the Upper Side is utilised to give a heightened effect, while the platform as seen from in front is as much as twelve or fourteen feet high, its top is little if any higher than the level of the ground behind it. All this ground, however, is sacred in the sense that, being at the same time within the precincts of the *ghamal* which is situated immediately behind the Upper Side, it is taboo to women. Apart from this, however, as with all sacred monuments in the Small Islands, once it has been used and sacrificed at, it loses its sanctity to the extent that, though it may never be removed, there is no taboo against any man touching or treading on it.

The taboo against removal has one interesting result, of a kind that would puzzle a future archaeologist attempting to interpret the lay-out of the monument without direct knowledge from the natives of how it was constructed. For, though we know that more than one Maki has been performed at Pete-hul, if we look at the Frontispiece we shall see that there is, as a matter of fact, only a single, apparently continuous platform stretching from one end of the Upper Side to the other. Examination of the actual structure shows, however, that the front elevation is not quite straight, and in some places bulges slightly forwards. The reason for this is that, for the purpose of sharing in the sanctity of past performances, and possibly also for considerations of space, each new stone-platform is built touching the last, so that at any one moment all the stone-platforms that have been built for successive performances of the Maki look like a single one, and the length of the dancing-ground (which is but a widening-out of the sacred way) is in fact determined by the length of the composite platform so formed.¹

¹ The same continuity achieved by adding new monuments on to old is found also in South Raga, where the sacrificial stone for each new performance of the Lo-sal rite (corresponding to the sacrifice of High Maki in the Small Islands) is "added to those previously composing the altar" (Tattevin, I, 1927, p. 90; see also present volume, p. 722), and also in the case of the *reta* of Malo referred to on p. 704. In the same way, during successive performances of the monolith-Maki in Atchin and Wala a fresh row of 100 monoliths is erected immediately in front of a similar number erected for the previous performance, thus producing, for the puzzlement of future archaeologists, a series of miniature stone avenues similar to, though smaller than, those found at Carnac and elsewhere. These will be illustrated in a future volume. A yet further archaeological puzzle relating to the orientation of graves is referred to on p. 534.

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STONE MEN OF MALEKULA

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Proceedings begin with the dance called *Le-tan*, and when this is over, payment of pigs is made to all those living who have previously made the sail of a sea-going canoe.¹ These pigs are presented by the chief owner placing them one by one upon his shoulder and calling on the receiver to come and take it. *Tunen* is then danced till dawn, when pigs are killed and placed on heaps of yams for each village represented. There is no *na-leng*.

The sail is then taken to the beach and placed on the canoe. This is then launched and the sail hoisted, and as they sail away the crew stand on the outrigger-platforms dancing and singing songs of the *Tunen* song-and-dance cycle.

CONSECRATION RITE (GODEFROY'S ACCOUNT)

561
The Inauguration dance, of which the above is a brief and incomplete account, is probably connected with the Consecration rite which Godefroy records:

[184] "This rite has for its object the putting of a taboo on the canoe or whaler, that is to say, making them taboo to women. Once such a vessel is consecrated, no woman may touch it, far less embark on it. . . .

[435
552] "In 1926, the four smaller clans of Vao—always associated together against the two larger—combined to buy a whaler 30 feet long; it cost them £200. As they received delivery of it about New Year's Day, they called it 'New-year,' which they pronounce *niouyet*.² For three months it lay at anchor off the beach belonging to Norohure, save for a few short journeys to the neighbouring islets and to the Canal du Segond.

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782 "On account of the ravages of the sea-worms which live in those warm waters and bore through the keels of wooden boats, they hastened to construct a shelter for their beautiful whaler. They immediately made this shelter taboo, by sacrificing a pig in the dancing-ground. This shelter is one of the four existing on the shores of the island; I say 'exist,' for in fact there was only one left standing at the time the shelter in question was erected, the others had fallen in and rotted where they were, but the natives referred to them as if they still existed, on account of the sacrifices that had been made for them.

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782 "As for the whaler, she received a grand consecration, similar to that of one of the great chiefs.³ In her honour were sacrificed a dozen great tusked boars and a hundred cocks and hens, and two tons of yams were offered and placed, all decorated, on the great *kal-kal*.⁴ . . . Then the natives danced all night till dawn, as is done in the great [Maki] rites.

¹ I.e. when the canoe is made and owned by the active "line" of Maki-men, to the members of the introducing "line."

² A typical example of French transliteration. The *t* is of course silent.

³ The word "chief" is used throughout this account to mean "man of high Maki rank."

⁴ Yam-table.

CANOES

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"This rite had the effect of conferring a high rank—that of *na-humba*, on the whaler. Henceforth, the natives will speak of her as of a person. When her owners desire to make a voyage in her, they say, '*N. [the whaler] e rong a vala—Niouyet e rong a vi Bu*,' '*N. wishes to sail—N. wants to go to Ambrym*," etc. And if, one day, a mishap should occur on some reef, they will perform mortuary rites as for a chief.¹ . . .

"This initial consecration affects only the whaler's hull. There will soon be another to 'bless' the sail, and its mast; then, lastly, for the rudder.

"These three rites have consecrated the whole whaler and her rigging: *N. [the whaler] has become a chief, and she lives in a house, also 'blessed*. As I have already said, no woman may either touch her, or go aboard. If, one day, a neighbouring white man takes it into his head to approach the native owners with a view to borrowing their whaler, the elders whom he has approached will stipulate as part of the contract that the white man shall undertake, under pain of paying a high fine, to respect the taboo against women."²

The consecrated canoe acquires the "soul" and rank of (a) the sacrificed tusker, and (b) its owner, the sacrificer.

Another result of its consecration is to confer on the canoe, or whaler, a "soul" through identification with the chief sacrificial tusker whose title it assumes. Since the owner, i.e. the sacrificer, himself takes the same title, it is clear that this rite is in fact another form of *Maki*, in which not only the man, but also the canoe, takes on the rank of the sacrificed boar, and the two are, in this respect, identical.

Godfrey describes in moving terms the fate of a boat whose owner had died. The whaler was found "apparently abandoned under an old shelter. [The vessel had been bought in Noumea, and they had paid 2000 francs for it.³] It is no longer in use . . . simply because the chief shareholder (two clans shared in the purchase) has died, and, since then, none of his relatives have dared to revivify the 'soul' ⁴ of this whaler. . . .

¹ See below, p. 536.

² Godfrey, I, 1934, pp. 36-7. On one occasion, the young men of Pete-hul lent their "Comet" (see p. 470) to a young planter from a neighbouring isle, for a considerable sum. Several months later, the elders of Pete-hul, having found out that the young planter had allowed his wife aboard, went into a great rage, and forced their young clansmen who had arranged the affair to pay over to them the whole of the money they had received as rent.

³ At pre-war rate of exchange. The incident took place about 1915.

⁴ Godfrey does not record the native word which he translates "soul." The endowing of a canoe with individuality which this rite implies recalls Rivers's description, I, vol. I, pp. 170-1, of a rite performed at the launching of a canoe in Moia and Merlav which is similar to that carried out at the birth of a child.

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STONE MEN OF MALEKULA

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752 any clots of blood that may remain.¹ The penis is then wrapped in a dressing of soft leaves of a kind called *ro vile-vile*, over which is then wound the usual boy's penis-wrapper made of the split half of a banana leaf, called *nu-mba-nu-mbe*.²

Novices enter initiation house.

881 After this application, each novice lies down on the beach to await the ceremonial procession into the initiation house.

When all are ready, and have rested a little, all the men of the village join in a procession from the beach inland to the dancing-ground, dancing and singing songs of the *Na-rel* cycle. The tutors dance among the rest, each with his novice beside him. The novices, however, hardly feel like dancing, and walk as best they can, each carrying a club of a kind called *wura*³ over his left shoulder, while in his right hand he holds a twig cut from the hardwood tree called *tor-tore*, which he moves up and down as if it were an adze. This twig is called by the same name *tele*⁴ as the knife with which he was incised, symbolical of the operation he has just suffered.

So the procession, some singing and dancing, while the novices bemusedly wave their mock adzes, makes its way up the path into the dancing-ground. As they enter the ground a single pig is sacrificed and the gongs strike up the rhythm called *na-mbe ne-ös-ös*, to the accompaniment of which they process to the further end. Then the singing ceases, and, to the accompaniment of a fresh rhythm, called *na-mbe ril-dralen*, the procession turns, and moves silently in the serpentine course called *gha vire-vire* back over the ground till, finally, they leave it and enter into the special house built for the novices on the high ground behind the Upper Side.

3. THIRTY DAYS' SECLUSION

Must not be seen too close by women.

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784 Here, and in the surrounding enclosure, they remain for thirty days, accomplishing their *rite de passage* into manhood, corresponding to the similar thirty-day period elapsing between physical birth and the child's first presentation to the world.⁵ On Atchin, during the corresponding thirty-day period, the novices may not on any account be seen by women.

¹ This treatment also indicates considerable medical knowledge, whether conscious or no, it being generally accepted in European surgery that the presence of a blood clot predisposes both to infection and to the formation of redundant scar tissue.

² Informal penis-wrappers made in this way are adopted without ceremony by boys who are about to attain puberty but have not yet been initiated. The word *nu-mba-nu-mbe* is a reduplication of a form of the word *na-mbues* used on Atchin for the plaited penis-wrapper worn by adults, for which the Vao term is *na-asu*.

³ Possibly the same as the Atchin *n'ei e ras*.

⁴ More usually used for a shell adze.

⁵ See p. 179; also the thirty-day period of retreat after the Maki (pp. 394, 402).

INITIATION INTO MANHOOD ON VAO

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On Vao, however, this form of restriction is laxer, since women may see them, but only at a distance, and may not speak to them. Here also, however, as at Atchin, this prohibition does not take effect from the time of the operation, since women line the route by which they process from beach to dancing-ground, but comes into force only after their entrance into the initiation house, an interesting indication of the convergence of two originally separate rites, already referred to.¹

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The first hoax. Tutors say they are going to fetch fine mats, but in fact strew white ashes on floor.

But even now the novices are allowed no rest. The moment they are in the house, the hoaxes begin. The novices are at first led to believe that they are to be treated magnificently and made comfortable beyond their dreams, and when their tutors say "Now we'll go and get new *tapa* mats (*ta-mbagha mbar*) for you," they feel their dreams are about to come true. But the tutors return with nothing better than baskets full of white ashes, which they spread on the floor for the novices to sleep on, without mat or pillow of any kind. As in all things connected with initiation, these ashes serve a dual purpose, on the one hand acting as a disinfectant,² continually finding their way, despite the penis-wrappers and the soft dressing of *ro vile-vile* leaves beneath, to sting and cauterise the wound, and on the other providing the means towards a practical joke on the poor novices.

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Initiates dance and sing all night in initiation house.

Even could they sleep under these conditions, they may not for the noise. For all night long, for the first five nights of their sojourn, the tutors and other initiates dance up and down the centre of the house singing songs of the *Tughunuan* and *Le-tean* cycles, kicking up dust mixed with white ashes over the prostrate novices.

This all-night dancing continues, depriving the novices of sleep, for the five days that constitute the intensive period of the rite.

Le-tean song (corresponding to Atchin Kulen).

Of these songs, those belonging to the *Le-tean* cycle, corresponding to the *Atchin Kulen*, are panegyrics about those who have performed the *Maki* rite and taken *Maki* titles.

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Tughunuan song.

Songs belonging to the *Tughunuan* cycle are of a very different character, approximating more closely to children's songs, being for the most part about birds or fruit, and to each of these some sort of hoax is attached.

¹ See p. 483.

² Against organisms, such as tetanus, already present in the earth. See also p. 259.

STONE MEN OF MALEKULA

Mode of application.

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In all cases the method of administration is the same. The leaves, all of which must be of one of the three kinds mentioned, are broken up and placed in a basin made out of a number of umbrella-palm leaves, into which water is also poured and a red-hot stone put in to heat it. The leafy basin is then folded up for a short time, during which the water draws out the juices from the leaves. In folding up the basin the leaves forming it are so manipulated that a kind of spout is left, by means of which the infusion is then poured over the wound, after which the packet is opened and placed beneath the wound so that the steam rising from it shall continue to play around and soothe it.¹ As each packet is opened, the tutor addresses the novice and, pointing at the leaf from which the infusion has been made, says, "You see this leaf. You used to call it (e.g.) *rūmbi*. Well, its real name is *moŋ-ghat* (the name of a fish). Now you know." The novice dutifully repeats the mock name, and duly pays for the esoteric knowledge with the customary fee of a plaited belt or other small object.

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For three days the novices may not drink, nor for four days may they eat puddings.

For the first three days after the operation the novices may not drink water, since the passing of water is both painful and necessitates the too frequent removal of the dressings; nor may they for four days eat puddings, which are considered too rich, but are fed chiefly on roast white yams.²

The prohibition against drinking water may also have a ritual significance. It is specifically mentioned in connexion with initiation in all districts, and a similar prohibition is a feature of ritual abstinence on many other occasions, as in gong-making.³

To what extent the restrictions on food also, eminently sound as they appear from our point of view, can be said to be based on medical grounds is doubtful, since their application is in all cases ritualised, and as such is regarded by the natives as part of the system of ordeals that the novices have to endure. Thus ritual demands that the restrictions begin and end for all novices at once, irrespective of their individual physical condition.

The raising of the restrictions follows the usual initiatory pattern in that (a) a farcical homily is addressed to the novice and (b) the novice must pay.

THIRD DAY

Removal of restriction on drinking water. Mock name for water.

The ban on the drinking of water is brought to a close on the evening of the third day, when one of the initiates brings a bambooful of water

¹ Equivalent to a hot fomentation, producing hyperaemia.

² The word for roasting is *tun-tun* (Atchin *tu-tun*).

³ See p. 335.

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and props it up close to the door of the special house. Each novice, with his tutor, is then called out in turn by the leading man, who addresses the novice, saying, "You see this. Up till today you have always called this *nu-u* (the ordinary word for fresh water). This isn't its real name. Its real name is *ne-lum*." This word *lum* is really an adjective meaning "cool," here elevated to the status of a mock secret word. The novice, having learnt that it is better to accept the insult than to risk the displeasure of the initiates, dutifully repeats the word *ne-lum*, pays his fee to the leading man, both for the esoteric knowledge and for the water, and forthwith drinks. The fee consists of some small object such as a plaited belt, or, latterly, a stick of tobacco. The verb describing this and other payments made on similar occasions is *gu-ghugh*.

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FIFTH DAY

Novices run the gauntlet called "Catching rails."

The ban on eating pudding is similarly lifted on the fifth day, but before this a special hoax is performed called *ghore pilagh*, "catching rails." Rails are the long-legged wading birds after which the dance called *Pilagh* is named, a dance performed chiefly by women in connexion with mortuary rites.¹ "Catching rails" is a ritual sport corresponding to that which in Atchin is called *hor-hor mara*, "catching eels," which in that island occurs frequently in mythological tales and is actually performed during initiation, when certain of those previously initiated divide into two parties and ritually "catch eels" all round the island till they converge at the spot on the beach where the novices are awaiting inspection by their mothers' brothers on the day after the operation. The "eels" are represented by long rolls of leaves plucked just before unfolding and dangled from strings attached to bamboo poles which those taking part in the performance from time to time close in on and spear.

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Just how "catching rails" is done on Vao I do not know, though the main features of it appear to be the same. The hoax consists in a combination of this motive with what we should regard as the antiseptic measure of sterilising the wound with white ashes, all carried out in the humorously bullying atmosphere that obtains throughout the initiation rites. The initiates form up in two lines in the enclosure outside the house, and the novices, having been told they are going to chase rails, are brought out of the house and made, without penis-wrappers, to run the gauntlet between the two lines of initiates, who, as they run, throw white ashes on to their wounds. The stronger and braver novices run

¹ See p. 323.

881 quickly through, and, of course, suffer the least; the weaker collapse with the pain and, forgetting to advance, remain weeping till forced on. Though I did not witness any hoaxes on Vao, it is necessary to correct the first impression of sheer gruesomeness in this hoax by referring to a similar performance I witnessed on Atchin, one of many to be described in my forthcoming work on that island. It is impossible to understand the atmosphere of these hoaxes without reference to the psychology of the initiates, in whom a strong dose of pity was mixed even with the atmosphere of bullying excitement and intrigue preceding the hoax, resulting in the fact that the moment the hoax was over all bullying immediately ceased, and the initiates were full of sympathy and comfort for the very boys that they were gruelling a minute before. The novices, of course, know that this will be the case, and it is this ambivalent attitude on the part of the initiates which changes what to us would appear unmitigated bullying into a ritual act appreciated by the novices in retrospect, almost as much as it undoubtedly is by the initiates themselves.

Removal of restriction on eating pudding. Mock name for pudding. Novices are allowed to wash for the first time.

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784 Nevertheless, the novices can hardly be said to enjoy it at the time, and it is accordingly this moment that is chosen for the first real sign of return to normal creature comforts by the lifting of the ban against eating pudding. Even now, however, the atmosphere of mock-esoteric learning combined with the ever-present motive of humiliating the novices is carried on in that, before eating, the wretched boys are made to say that the real name of the pudding is in fact *romber-romber*, the name of a particularly unpleasant kind of grass. Not till each novice has been told this and has duly repeated it is he allowed to eat. Even now, since the puddings are considered too rich, and partly in order to bait him, he is only allowed a tiny scrap, though on all subsequent evenings he is allowed to eat as much as he likes, and is, in fact, fed with the best of everything that can be obtained.

Now also, for the first time, he is allowed to wash, in water brought by his father.

881 *End of all-night dancing inside the house. Novices made comfortable with mats.*

That night, for the first time since the operation, there is no dancing in the house, and the novices are really brought the fine *ta-mbagha* mats to lie on that they had been promised the first night, but for which white ashes had been substituted, and they are installed in comfort. Though the hoaxing atmosphere continues throughout their thirty days' seclusion, the painful aspect of them ceases, and the rest of their time spent there is on the whole a pleasant one.

INITIATION INTO MANHOOD ON VAO

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shooting with bows and arrows, first at the trees surrounding the dancing-ground, and then all over the territory of their home-village. 881

During the next few days all the new initiates together proceed on shooting expeditions to each village in which the mother of any one of them was born. A whole day is thus given up to each village in turn, till all have been visited, the boys roaming at will around the village territory, shooting at trees, and the whole band being entertained with food by the mother's brother of the boy whose maternal village they are honouring.

Avoidance of women gradually relaxed. Novices sleep in initiation house till opportunity arises for Initiation into Sex. 881
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While being thus free, however, the aura of seclusion still hangs around them, and for a short indeterminate period they may not speak to women unless first spoken to, this period being characterised by an avoidance of all female companionship, particularly that of a boy's own mothers and sisters,¹ whom he is not permitted to address till he has himself been first spoken to by an old woman of another village.

Initiation, while thus weaning a boy from the influence of his female relatives and introducing him into manhood, symbolised by the prominent part played by shooting with bows and arrows, and though sexual in that it includes incision and the constant threat of homosexual action on the part of ghosts, does not, however, constitute an introduction to heterosexual life. This is reserved for a later occasion, namely the special rite of sex initiation which is performed not on the island of Vao, nor on the mainland of Malekula, but which forms part of a youth's first overseas expedition to Oba or some other island in the matrilineal area described in the next chapter. No uninitiated boy can take part in any such expedition, nor, once initiated, may he cease sleeping in the initiation house till the opportunity arises for him to join one. Only after such a sex-initiatory expedition has taken place may he return to sleep in his paternal compound.

HUNDRED-AND-SEVENTH DAY

Hoax regarding homosexual intercourse with ghosts of the slain. 881

I did not record any rite held on the hundredth day, such as occurs elsewhere. This may be a case of omission. However this may be, the non-heterosexual character of manhood-initiation receives its final expression in the last rite connected with it, which takes place on the hundred-and-seventh night (*na-mbong mow hangawul raman ghe-mbüt*) after the operation, when an "unmarried" initiate climbs up inside the house to the apex of the roof, calling out to all those who have died a violent death (*ta-mat-oamp*) to come and have homosexual intercourse with the new initiates.

¹ These words being used, of course, in a classificatory sense.

THE PILGRIMAGE TO OBA

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their arms decorated with finely plaited arm-badges and their hair with pink and golden ferns. If the rites on Vao are, however, anything like those on Atchin, this statement is far from true. There, the attitude on leaving is, as I have said, one of extreme effacement. Nor would there be any use in so adorning themselves, since the moment they enter the canoe they are made to lie on the floor, covered with mats, stones, paddles, food baskets, coconuts, whole bunches of bananas and all the odds and ends that are carried in the canoe. It is not till they return that they adorn themselves in all the finery of conquering youth.

Once arrived on Oba, the adult members of the expedition go to the inland villages to trade in pigs, leaving the novices and their tutors to carry out the necessary rites, of which the most important are these: ¹

"As they leave the canoe they must ritually bathe, that is to say they must not plunge into the water, but, standing in it only up to their knees, they must, with solemn motions, sprinkle ² the sea-water copiously over their shoulders, chest, head and arms. Then they unload the provisions which they have brought: wild yams, bananas and coconuts. While bathing and unloading they must remain silent, not uttering a word. Complete silence is obligatory not only now, but during the whole of their sojourn in Oba, as well as during the voyage, both outward and homeward." ³

"During the whole of the time they maintain a severe fast. It is indeed a hard fast to be restricted to two or three bananas and poor-quality yams a day.

"On the three last days there is a curious rite. For each novice they dig a shallow pit in which they lie on their backs and are covered with plaited coconut leaves. On the fourth day ⁴ the buried youths rise from the dead, still silent.

"Then, all now being on their feet, they load the canoes with the pigs bought by their elders.

"If the wind is in the proper quarter for sailing home (and they say that at this moment it always is), they pull up the anchor at about four o'clock in the afternoon and next dawn arrive triumphantly at Vao." ⁵

⁶ Speiser adds. (what also occurs on Atchin) that while the novices are away some of their coconut trees and part of their yam-gardens are destroyed.⁶

¹ In the case of the pilgrimage as carried out from Atchin, the Atchinese have a special Lodge built by the shore, which they occupy and in which they enjoy a kind of diplomatic immunity from attack.

² Godefroy uses the religious term "asperge."

³ This is probably a mistake. As the pilgrimage is performed from Atchin, the ban is lifted on the return voyage.

⁴ This almost certainly means the fifth day. Confusion as to dates often arises owing to the twenty-four-hour period beginning at sundown.

⁵ Godefroy, I, 1933, pp. 132-3. Here is another confusion. Twice elsewhere he states that the rite lasts ten days.

⁶ Speiser, 3, p. 289.

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MORTUARY RITES

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those female kinswomen of the dead man called *vene na wroan*,¹ who have married into other villages, and who at the news of death return to the home-village and spend a large part of their time in the Lodge with the mortuary officials. Thus, the two categories of women living in their own village by whom they may not be seen are (i) the unmarried girls, and (ii) all the wives of the male members of the village, though this latter category includes their own mothers, who keep them supplied with puddings.

A further restriction which applies only to the chief mortuary official is the prohibition against eating anything that has been touched by women (except his "mothers," who supply him with food), and a reciprocal prohibition against any woman eating anything that has been touched by him. The first thing he does on issuing from his seclusion is publicly to touch the yams which are to be distributed to the assembled guests, in order to demonstrate the removal of this restriction.

Duties of chief mortuary official.

The main duties of the chief mortuary official are:

- (1) to prepare the body for burial;
- (2) to place the morsel in the mouth of the dead man during the first feast of communion with him before burial;
- (3) to conduct the subsequent communion rites held daily at sunrise and sunset until the Fourteenth Day after death;
- (4) to blacken himself on the Fifth Day;
- (5) to remain in seclusion till the ceremony of *Tulagh* or *Talogh*, when he is paid for his services.

Duties of assistant mortuary officials.

The main duties of the assistant mortuary officials are:

- (1) to dig the grave;
- (2) to deputise, if he so wishes, for the chief official at the twice-daily communion rites;
- (3) to blacken themselves on the Fifth Day;
- (4) to remain in seclusion till the Fourteenth Day;
- (5) then to swim out into deep water with the canoe laden with provisions for the dead man.

DEATH AND BURIAL

When a *mer-sean* dies, a taboo is placed on the fruit of such tree as is in season at that time. It is applicable to both men and women, and is not lifted till the morning of the first anniversary of his death.

¹ See pp. 133-4.